



PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation *Chief Richard Weber*

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Contact: *CI-HQ-COMMUNICATIONSEDUCATION@ci.irs.gov
IRS – Criminal Investigation

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Alabama Resident Pleads Guilty for Role in Stolen Identity Tax Refund Fraud Scheme

*Filed More Than 335 False Tax Returns Seeking Over \$400,000 in Tax Refunds and
Attempted to Threaten Witness*

A Montgomery County, Alabama resident pleaded guilty today to one count of wire fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft, announced Acting Assistant Attorney General Caroline D. Ciraolo of the Justice Department's Tax Division and U.S. Attorney George L. Beck, Jr. of the Middle District of Alabama.

According to court documents, James Vernon Battle, 30, used stolen personal identification information to prepare and file at least 335 false federal income tax returns for tax years 2013 and 2014 that fraudulently claimed more than \$400,000 in tax refunds. Battle obtained the stolen personal identification information from Wendy Huff. Huff worked at two loan companies in Montgomery, Alabama. Battle directed the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to issue the requested refunds via prepaid debit cards and U.S. Treasury checks. Those prepaid debit cards and checks were sent to various addresses in Montgomery, including Huff's residence. Battle also brought several U.S. Treasury checks to Huff's workplace where she used her position to cash them. Huff returned half of the proceeds to Battle and kept the balance for herself.

Battle faces a statutory maximum sentence of 20 years in prison for the wire fraud charge and a mandatory minimum sentence of two years in prison for the aggravated identity theft charge, which will be in addition to any other term of imprisonment he receives. He also faces substantial monetary penalties and restitution.

Wendy Huff previously pleaded guilty and is scheduled to be sentenced on July 14. A sentencing date has not been scheduled for Battle.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Ciraolo and U.S. Attorney Beck commended special agents of IRS-Criminal Investigation and the U.S. Secret Service, who investigated the case, and Trial Attorneys Michael C. Boteler and Robert J. Boudreau of the Tax Division and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan Ross of the Middle District of Alabama, who are prosecuting this case.

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